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T R A I L & L A N D S C A P E

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THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB
- Founded 1879 -

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Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: *THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST*, devoted to publishing research in natural history. *TRAIL & LANDSCAPE*, a non-technical publication of general interest to local naturalists.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for local members. See inside back cover.

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(Editorial Address: see opposite)

The Macoun Field Club has been doing splendid things for twenty-five years with Ottawa young people. Many have enjoyed the unique experiences and opportunities for natural history studies which the club provides, and quite a few have become professional biologists. The MFC publishes a fine journal, the LITTLE BEAR; the following appeared in this year's Anniversary edition.

THE HISTORY OF THE MACOUN FIELD CLUB H. Loney Dickson

Everything got started on Feb. 21, 1948 when, at a council meeting of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Dr. Victor E.F. Solman moved that a member, "Mr. W.K.W. Baldwin act as a chairman of a small committee to investigate the possibility of expansion of Club activities into a junior organization." Dr. Pauline Snure seconded the motion, and thus the Macoun Field Club was on its way. Why Macoun Field Club? The name Macoun came from John Macoun, a man of great knowledge on the aspects of natural history, who had travelled and collected widely across Canada.

When the Macoun Field Club started off, it was decided that it should be run by two groups of people, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club and the National Museums of Canada. So it was and has been ever since. These groups have been very beneficial and are essential in the smooth running of the MFC. Dr. Alcock, Director of the Museum at that time, gave the Club room 25, right at the first, to hold our meetings in.

The Club began with twenty members, mostly from the OFNC. The following year a new group of twenty was added and in 1950 a third group of twenty was added. We then had our three age groups, Junior, Intermediate and Senior; but all with a limit of twenty members each.

It was in the third year that the Little Bear came into existence with the help of Dr. Millman of the National Observatory, who drew up the plans for Ursa Minor and gave us the legend. Mr. Ingram of the Museum designed the cover. Mr. Groh and D.C. Maddox edited the Little Bear for at least the first twelve years.

Miss Mabel Godwin helped a lot in the earlier years. It was also in this year that our first study area was found, the area being a four-square-mile plot around Champlain Bridge, stretching from the Ontario to the Quebec shores.

In 1953 the Club instituted a 25-cent membership fee. In 1954 the Club moved to room 8 at the Museum. The first of our natural history collections trickled in about this time too, with great help from Mr. Groh. Mr. Baldwin was replaced as chairman in 1952 by Dr. E.L. Bousfield, followed by Mr. Bleakney in 1956. In 1958 Dr. H.J. Scoggan took over till 1960 when he stepped down and went on to help Mr. Groh with the Little Bear.

It was in 1961 that Mr. Francis Cook (a former member of the Club, now Curator of Herpetology at the National Museum of Natural Sciences) became chairman. It was this year that the Club suffered a great loss in the unfortunate death of D.C. Maddox - a very helpful and enthusiastic person. In 1963 Dr. A.H. Clarke (a malacologist at NMNS) took over the chair for a term with Mr. A.A. Ellis and Mr. G. Tessier as assistants. The attendance in these years grew to Seniors 25, Intermediates 50 and Juniors 50.

The second study area was established (1964) in the Billings Bridge area, now containing the shopping centre. In 1966, Mr. S.D. Macdonald took over as chairman followed by Dr. I.M. Brodo in the fall of 1966 with Mr. Mike Shchepanek as an able and willing assistant.

The "Badge Winner's Honour Circle" was started in 1967. That year the Junior group participated in five field trips. Arnet Sheppard was editor of the Little Bear followed in 1968 by Ross King who kept this position until 1970.

In 1969 the Club got a sudden burst of enthusiasm. A new study area two miles southwest of Bells Corners on Moodie Drive was given us for our full use by the National Capital Commission with the cooperation of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the RCMP. (This was the "old study area"). This was the first year of the newsletter, edited by Cathy Fairbarns. It was also the first year of picture plates in the back of the Little Bear.

In 1968, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Scholarship (FON camp) was awarded for the first time, to Arnet Sheppard. It consisted of an expense-free trip to the Bruce Peninsula for two weeks. In 1969 the newsletter was edited by Steve Darbyshire. It was in this year that Matthew Fairbarns (a present member) met fame, with the first lecture by a Macoun member to last a whole meeting. It was on (that's right) shells and shellfish. This was our first year of overnight camping for the Senior group, and it consisted of three days in the rain at the farm of Mary Stuart, an OFNC member. In 1969 Gordon Hamre received the FON Scholarship.

In 1970 Dave Watson came out to help with the Junior and Intermediate groups. Gordon Hamre edited the Little Bear while Glen Armstrong did the newsletter. Stephen Darbyshire received the FON Scholarship. In 1971 Mr. J. Alex Fournier became the Club's Museum Liaison Officer. The Little Bear was edited by Stephen Darbyshire and the newsletter by Alex Peck, while Colin Barnard received the FON Scholarship.

The Club's first canoe trip was held in 1971 in Algonquin Park. A second trip to Algonquin was held in the summer of 1972. In the year 1971-72, Mr. Alex Fournier took over as chairman. Dr. Brodo has stayed on as advisor right up to the present day. It was this year that the Club felt another loss, with the death of Herb Groh - a man who had helped the Club out from its beginning.

Then this year, 1972-73, Dr. E. Haber, a botanist with NMNS, took over as chairman with Len Marhue assisting. Mike Shchepanek retired as assistant about the same time.

So there are the 25 years the Macoun Field Club has been in existence. Although some parts of our history are very sketchy, I think it could be said that the Club has had a very fruitful life and that the members past, present and future, have something to be proud of and a good reason to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

THE MACOUN NATURE STUDY AREA

It is a wonderful thing to know of a place, close to home, where you can watch birds, the changing seasons, or go for a walk alone. I have found such a place, where I can wander through woods and fields all day, and often see no one. Here on a cool October morning the ducks settle on the beaver ponds in the hundreds, sometimes thousands. Some afternoon a pair of Gray Jays might play about a blowing milkweed in the late autumn sunshine. This is a place where there is little to show that a city of 300,000 lies just a few miles away, yet it is close to Ottawa - from the tree tops I can even see the Parliament Buildings. It is just south of Bells Corners, in the Greenbelt.

A string of beaver ponds drains north across the middle of the area, towards the Ottawa River. On almost all sides the ponds are flanked by cedar woods and swamps. Back from the cedars are woods and fields of many kinds. Most of the fields are in various stages of reforestation with Red Pine. The woods are young, usually with less than forty years behind them. There is the older White Pine woods, sombre and shaded, and the hard-maple bush. More ponds are found scattered about, well-set and hidden.

This land, like all land around Ottawa, was farmland not so many years back. The soil here was thin, and wet, and just full of stones. The farmers are gone now, and the foundations of farmhouse, barn and silo are crumbling. In the dark and wet of the cedar swamps you will find old wagons, long broken and rotting. The old roads those wagons rolled over now form part of a beaver dam, or a nature trail, or cut a dusty line across the summer fields.

This area was chosen as a nature study area by the Macoun Field Club because of its rich plant and animal life. It is the site of several long-term studies by Macoun members. The vegetation map was made as a basis for these and other studies.

Many different habitats are represented here, and as a result a great variety of plants and animals is to be found. A fine show of spring flowers is to be seen in the maple woods - bloodroot, hepatica, squirrel corn and foam flower, to name just a few. Rare flowers and other plants have been isolated and protected on 'islands' by the often swampy nature of the land.

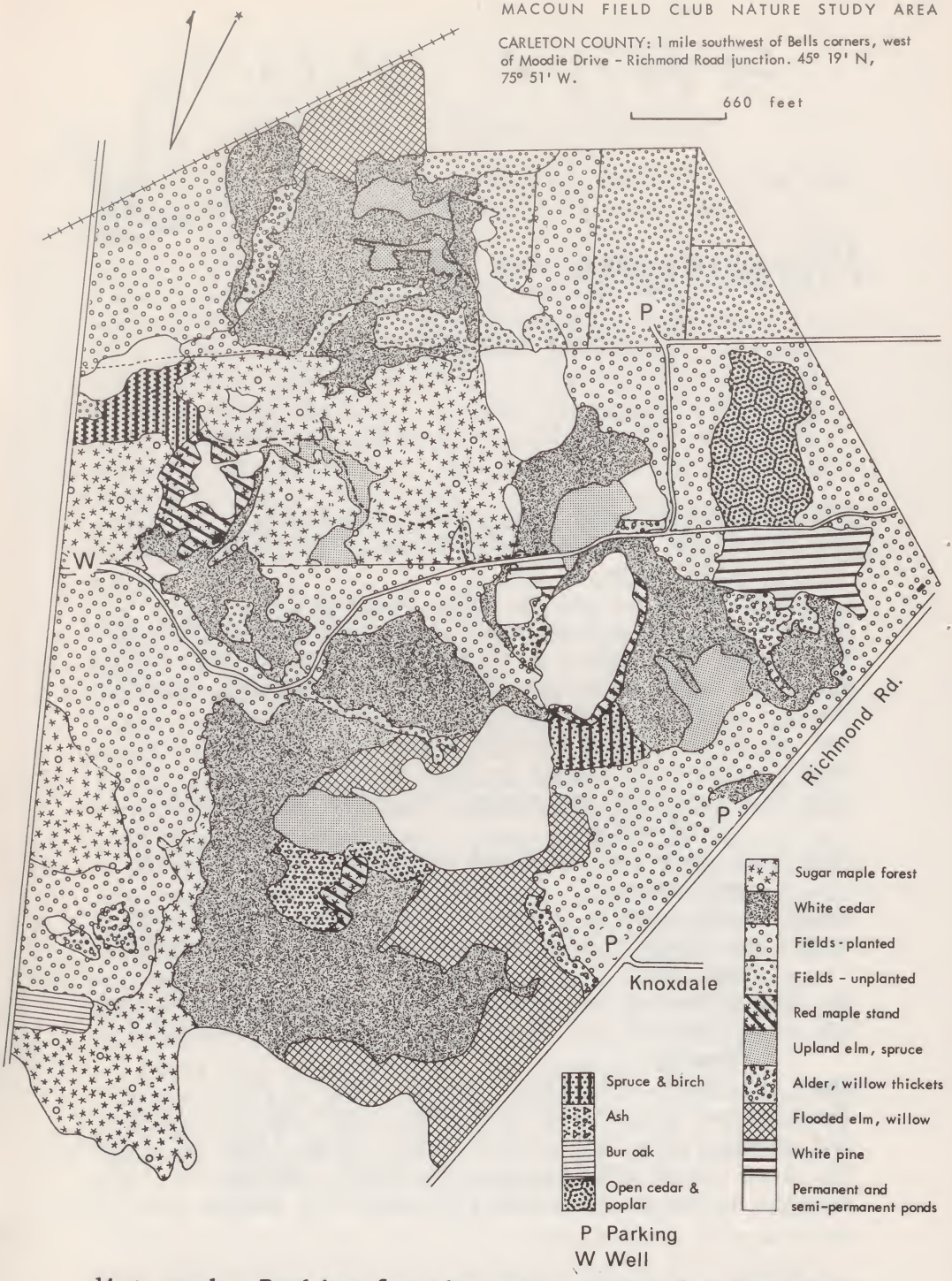
Deer, fox and mink roam in and out of the area. For them the woods extend another mile west and three south. Raccoons and porcupines have dens within the area, warmly sited in hollow old basswoods. Mice, squirrels and rabbits are very common.

Crows often plague the owls, driving the big birds from one spruce to another, and the jays seem to take pleasure in alerting the whole world to nothing at all. Ten thousand frogs join the Whip-poor-wills and thrushes to set the air ringing on a moonlit summer night. In the ponds, swallows and grackles nest in the drowned elms, filling the dead with life.

I find the ponds to be the most fascinating section of this area, since much activity centres around them. They are often hard to reach, but there is now a dock on the largest pond, part of a nature trail for the handicapped. The dock is a good observation point on the shallow pond, and the trail is pleasant and interesting. Another nature trail, being created by the Macoun Field Club in the maple woods, is of a different character. It will make you feel like less of a tourist and more of an explorer. A well and tables are found at the west end.

In winter it is very peaceful. Snowmobiles are no longer permitted in the Greenbelt, and snowshoes and trail-skis are encouraged. There is an organized ski trail looping through the area, with parking on Richmond Road across from Knoxdale Road.

The whole area is southwest of Bells Corners. A dirt road running west from a church (with parking space), at the crossing of Richmond Road and Moodie Drive, gives access to a larger part of the area. There is still more parking space at the end of the



dirt road. Parking for the nature trail for the handicapped is about a mile south of Hwy 7 on Richmond Road.

There is much more to see and discover than could be described here. Only visiting the area will show you these things.

Phenomena

Lorie Jean Miller

Thin columns of mist rose up off the lake,
And the birds trilled their songs in the morning's
still wake,
A mallard flew up with a full throated cry,
As he circled the tree tops in the morning's grey sky.
The leaves were still wet from the rain of that night,
But the leaves were soon dried in the morning sunlight.
The air was filled with crisp autumn scents,
And the fowl of the woodlot knew what it meant.
They gathered in flocks to fly to the south,
Down the long winding rivers and past the river's
broad mouth.
They flew over the mainland and water both shallow
and deep,
While small mammals prepared for a long winter sleep.
With the autumn the leaves had turned flaring orange
and gold,
But had withered and died with the winter's harsh cold.
The snow covered the woodlot with its cold heartless
touch,
What the deer could find for food wasn't much.
They waited for spring when they would again thrive,
And through the long winter months they tried to survive.
The deer stood and listened for maybe swallow or lark,
As they tried to fill empty stomachs on poplar and bark.

(Written in November 1971 when Miss Miller was
12 years old. Ed.)

F.O.N. NEWS

Federation of Ontario Naturalists

Results from Resolutions passed at Annual Meeting and forwarded to Federal and Provincial Governments

Quetico Provincial Park has been declared a Primitive Park.....careful review being made of Niagara Escarpment with comments to be submitted to Government..... Blue Racer, Timber Rattlesnake, Bald Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon have been formally declared endangered species under the Act - further research continuing and scientific documentation will have to be made to support some species.....the Trillium will not be protected by law at this time - ministry will change views if real evidence brought forth to warrant it..... Canadian Wildlife Service and Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in U.S. have problem of waterfowl mortality owing to lead shot under review - U.S. is attempting to complete conversion to iron shot by 1975-76 - iron shot will probably be $1.00 more for box of 24 shells than lead.....ministry has found that some townships pay bounties on five different species - only specific authority for payment of bounty is foxes - all bounty payments on animals other than foxes is technically illegal but political local pressures are considerable - government hopes to rectify situation early in fall.....cruelty to animals is a federal matter dealt with under the Criminal Code - ministry would like to see a test case on pole trapping before the courts to determine the land-owner's right to protect his own property and would also like to be informed where pole trapping is occurring or has occurred..... government still working on mass transit proposal..... no reply yet received from the Honourable A.B.R. Lawrence on the Environment Council.....Prime Minister Trudeau has not replied on Arctic Ecology - follow-up has been written and resolution sent to all federal M.P.s in Ontario but little response so far..... Ontario Hydro has announced a new advertising policy urging conservation of energy rather than consumption .....background material being prepared for assistance of Board of Directors when a meeting is held to formulate the F.O.N. position on Energy Policy.

Vi Humphreys,
Chairman,
F.O.N. Committee

A Chronicle of

PECULIAR BEHAVIOUR IN A RUFFED GROUSE

by Mary Anne Phillips

[The writer of the following notes became concerned about a Ruffed Grouse whose oddly aggressive behaviour forced itself on members of her family. She had phoned W. E. Godfrey of the National Museum of Natural Sciences for advice, and in response to his suggestion, set down the story in diary fashion as it happened. Dr. Godfrey passed the notes along to us to share with T&L readers. He mentioned that there are accounts of somewhat similar behaviour in the literature; one local instance was described by Dr. J. W. Groves in 1957 in the Canadian Field-Naturalist 71(4):200. The behaviour described below, however, seemed the most persistent of any case to come to his attention. As the writer noted in her letter, the bird appeared determined to become a member of the family. ... Editor.]

July 1 and for the following ten days my husband was on holidays and spent much of his time in a remote section of our woods, near the shore of the Gatineau. He was developing a woodland road with pick, shovel, loads of gravel etc. He became increasingly aware of a male ruffed grouse circling him, jumping into the gravel, pecking at the shovel, flying at his ankles and generally interfering with his work.

July 10: I accompanied my husband to the area. within two minutes the grouse had appeared, examined me suspiciously and vanished into the undergrowth. As I withdrew he circled closer to my husband, flying and pecking as before.

July 12: I phoned Dr. Godfrey for advice, as my husband's work was being seriously handicapped. He was always afraid of hitting the grouse or stepping on him by accident. Later, in desperation, we dropped a plastic laundry hamper over the grouse to inhibit his activities. He glared through the slats but seemed to bear us no permanent ill-will.

July 13 to July 23: Relationship with the grouse continued on this basis, with occasional resort to the laundry hamper cage. He even took to flying into the hamper when he saw it being fetched.

July 24: By this time the grouse has accepted other members of the family. As we descended the woodland road, he followed us to watch us swimming in the river. He clucked, cooed and flapped with excitement at the spectacle. Several times he nipped my (proffered) fingers and struck about with his wings.

July 25 & 26: To our surprise there was no grouse, either in the working or the swimming area.

July 27: He reappeared, approaching my husband, with only one tail feather.

July 29: No tail feathers.

July 30 to Aug. 15: Rare glimpses of the grouse. He travelled on foot and could not fly. We became concerned that he might be injured.

Aug. 16: The grouse reappeared at our swimming area with distinct traces of new tail feathers.

Aug. 20: The grouse, in full fettle once more, had to be consigned again to the laundry basket. On releasing him we noticed traces of blood around his beak and inside the basket, presumably from pecking.

Aug. 21 to 25: Rare appearances.

Aug. 26: My husband and I were swimming alone, the grouse standing by in friendly fashion. He stood on the dock to watch us in the water, sat on our towels etc. When I offered my hand he pecked my fingers, but no longer in his earlier hysterical fashion. He spread his shiny, new tail feathers and seemed to enjoy our presence, trotting after us up the path.

Aug. 31: We had long observed that the grouse seemed to recognize the chug and rattle of our rather ancient car. On this occasion, however, the grouse went so far as to attempt to follow the car when my husband left his work;

the bird jumped on the hood. My husband closed the car windows, fearing that the grouse might jump inside and become injured.

This brings the story up to date (Sept. 5). The photographs were taken on July 24, just before loss of the tail feathers. The photographer, David Lewis of the Ottawa Citizen, has asked me to assure you that they were taken from a distance of no more than 2 feet and with no artificial aid, such as a telescopic lens.

In conclusion, there are several points which interest or concern us:

1) The grouse becomes extremely excited by the sight of anything flapping (bath towels). This sight causes him to spread his tail, erect his ruff and charge like a bull at the flapping object.

2) The grouse is uninterested in wild bird seed, proffered as a peace offering. I observed him on several occasions, however, pecking wild blueberries from the bush.

3) He expresses himself by cooing and clucking and seems to recognize human "clucks" as some attempt at communication.

4) There is a soft opening in the grouse's beak, between his eyes. This flushes with excitement, as Dr. Godfrey indicated. The beak, however, appears extremely soft. Even friendly pecks at my hand resulted in bloodstains (his) on my skin. Is there a calcium deficiency?

5) The final thought is a rather sad one. We have noticed families of ruffed grouse in our woods for nearly 18 years. The area is entirely protected and remote: no hunting, of course. We do not own dogs. We have two belled, elderly cats who have no interest in the deep woods. The woods are thicker, the wildlife in general infinitely more bountiful than when we came. Our property is about 16 acres, the adjoining property about the same - so there is plenty of protected space. Does this forlorn male mean that his is the last of the line? We have noticed no other grouse this season. Is there hope that he will find a mate next season?

[It is Mrs. Phillips' hope that our readers might have answers to these questions!]

CHANGES TO THE A. O. U. CHECK LIST

In a recent issue of AUK (90:411, 1973), the American Ornithologists' Union published the 32nd supplement to its check list of North American birds. This particular supplement is of interest to most birders because of, *inter alia*, the changes made in a number of species. A list of these changes is as follows:

1. Great White Heron + Great Blue Heron → Great Blue Heron
2. Blue Goose + Snow Goose → Snow Goose
3. Common Teal + Green-winged Teal → Green-Winged Teal (Eurasian race / American race)
4. Harlan's Hawk + Red-tailed Hawk → Red-tailed Hawk
5. Herring Gull → Herring Gull / Thayer's Gull
6. Yellow-shafted Flicker + Red-shafted Flicker + Gilded Flicker → Common Flicker
7. Traill's Flycatcher → Willow Flycatcher (fitz-bew) / Alder Flycatcher (wee-bee-o)
8. Common Bushtit + Black-eared Bushtit → Bushtit
9. Myrtle Warbler + Audubon's Warbler → Yellow-rumped Warbler
10. Baltimore Oriole + Bullock's Oriole → Northern Oriole
11. Boat-tailed Grackle → Boat-tailed Grackle / Great-tailed Grackle
12. Seaside Sparrow + Dusky Seaside Sparrow + Cape Sable Sparrow → Seaside Sparrow
13. Slate-colored Junco + White-winged Junco + Oregon Junco → Dark-eyed Junco
14. Savannah Sparrow + Ipswich Sparrow → Savannah Sparrow

i.e. in 1, Great White Heron and Great Blue Heron become a single species named Great Blue Heron, while in 7 Traill's Flycatcher is split into two separate species, Willow and Alder Flycatcher.

These changes are based mainly on taxonomic evidence. One important factor is the presence or absence of interbreeding. A good example of this is the case of the Flickers. In the region of range overlap, appreciable interbreeding takes place between the Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted Flickers and the progeny in many cases look very much like the Gilded Flicker. Careful study has indicated that all of these birds must be considered members of a single species, the Common Flicker. In the case of the Traill's Flycatcher, evidence has been brought forward to show that the individuals with the "fitz-bew" call do not interbreed with those calling "wee-bee-o". Thus these have been split into two species.

Another type of change made in the 32nd supplement is in the English names of some species. Thus, for example, Common Scoter becomes Black Scoter; Upland Plover becomes Upland Sandpiper; Catbird changes to Gray Catbird; Knot to Red Knot, etc. The names American Kestrel (Sparrowhawk) and Merlin (Pigeon Hawk) already used by many, become official. These changes are made for various reasons, the overall aim being to reduce confusion in nomenclature and to obtain conformity in international usage. Various problems remain in this respect, however. For example, the species we used to call Common Egret is now Great Egret (Casmerodius albus). In Europe, this bird is labelled Egretta alba and is known as either Great White Heron or Great White Egret.

Other changes made concern genera, mainly the elimination of certain genera. Thus for example "Erolia" and "Ereuntes" genera are eliminated and the relevant species included in the genus "Calidris", e.g. the Semipalmated Sandpiper becomes "Calidris pusilla" and the Dunlin "Calidris alpina" etc.

Clearly, from the fact that these changes are being considered at the present time, they are borderline cases, and although the A.O.U. committee was unanimous on these proposals, various authorities disagree with some of the decisions. The present supplement indicates that there are more changes to come. Examples such as the Sapsuckers and the Rosy Finches spring to mind. So keep your A.O.U. list ready.

John Woolley
Bird Records Committee


Brenda Carter
1973

The Short-tailed Shrew

Brenda Carter

In the fall and winter the country mouse trap may yield a small insectivore with a sharp nose, short tail and fine soft fur like a rich, French velvet. Its deep gray nap, changing in every light, looks very much like moleskin, and the two pelts are quite similar; but the smaller size, and less developed digging paws will identify this mammal as a shrew. It is probably beneficial as it feeds on insects, worms and snails. Indeed, W. M. Ingram (P. Crowcroft, The Life of The Shrew) has observed a store of live snails kept by a short-tailed shrew for later use. It is not often that one is lucky enough to see a shrew in its natural habitat, where it seems to disappear at will, but its high-pitched, annoyed squeaks can often be heard.

The following statement was excerpted from a brief prepared by the Research & Briefs Committee of The OFNC.

THE PROTECTION OF WETLANDS AND OTHER NATURAL AREAS

The recent discussion on the topic of Progress, Public Safety and Swamps has prompted The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club to submit its views on these topics on behalf of its membership. In general we advocate the conservation of a variety of natural areas such as wetlands, woodlots, etc. and believe that some of these areas should be close to urban areas where people can benefit from them. This region at present has several types of wetlands, including bogs, swamps, marshes and rivers, which should not be destroyed. We realize that questions of public safety, economic development, and ecological viability must be considered with regard to conservation of particular areas and will comment briefly, in a general way, on these points below.

Reasons for Retention of Natural Areas

A variety of readily accessible natural areas is desirable because they provide opportunities for education, recreation and relaxation for a growing number of both adults and children. Education, both formal and informal, is increasingly concerned with biology, ecology and conservation. A better appreciation of the lessons of these subjects will be necessary if man is to survive for very long on this planet. Thus it is important that children grow up with some familiarity with nature and that schools be able to illustrate their lessons nearby. In addition to school children, there are many people studying various aspects of nature in clubs such as ours, in night classes and individually.

Recreation involving natural areas attracts many people, both young and old. Some are enjoying looking at birds, plants, insects, or sometimes animals as an interesting recreation. In natural areas where there are sufficient trails to avoid overuse, hiking, snowshoeing and skiing can also be popular recreations.

Some people simply find natural areas relaxing as a place of some tranquility in contrast to a world which they find increasingly hectic. For all these people natural areas would serve in a manner similar to that of play parks for children, football fields for teenagers and some city parks for adults. For all of them, such areas, to be of value, should be close to where they live.

Another, rather different type of reason for saving natural areas is that many take so long to develop, and hence to recreate, that they are essentially irreplaceable. Moreover, in some cases, these areas would be lost if there were much disturbance. We assume too great a responsibility when we destroy or lose by default irreplaceable things which we understand only imperfectly and may want at some later time.

Public Safety

The question of public safety has been raised in connection with natural areas. While we attempt by legislation to enforce safety practices and to remove hazards, safety ultimately depends on each individual learning to recognize hazards and to apply caution. ...Although accidental drownings are fairly common in lakes and rivers, there is no pressure to fence, fill or drain the Ottawa River or the lake at the summer cottage. The number of deaths in swamps must be very small... There seems to be little reason to take the irreversible step of destroying a swamp by draining or filling for safety reasons when good fences, or better, good education should be adequate. Very young children could get in difficulty in a wetland as well as in many other places...Clearly their safety requires that they be properly supervised.

As for mosquitoes, these are not supposed to be a health hazard according to the Medical Officer of Health.

Economic Considerations

Economic development is certainly the basis of most of the loss of natural areas... However, economic values are notoriously short-sighted since they are based on the prospect of a profit in reasonably short periods of time and on the satisfaction of the demands resulting from present affluence. This type of value judgement will destroy the environment for the selfish benefit of some of those now living at the expense of those who come later and some of those here now. ...the tax revenue resulting from development of a piece of land must be spent on providing services for it, and may not represent a clear public profit or benefit. Moreover, while the costs of many forms of education and recreation are quite obvious, the benefits are not easily assigned an economic value. ...their values are intangible and cannot be determined simply by their cost.

Natural wetlands such as swamps may have positive economic value in that they can stabilize water flows and reduce the stream or storm sewer flows during storms. In areas without fire hydrants, they can provide water reservoirs in case of fire.

The essence of modern town planning is the retention of natural areas as an integral part of the plan. In addition to their merits mentioned above, such areas serve as buffer zones to divide an otherwise continuous housing development. Their positive value in this regard can be seen from the fact that, where building lots border on NCC lands, these are readily sold at a premium of $1500 and more, each.

Viability of Natural Areas

While there are conservationists who say they want to save every wetland, we realize this is a somewhat unrealistic goal. In particular, some wetlands and other areas may not be viable as conservation areas for a variety of reasons. They may be too small and isolated to survive, it may not be possible to maintain their water supply because of surrounding development, or they may be used as dumps by truckers or by neighbours who want to dispose of surplus soil or grass and tree trimmings.

It would be pointless to fight for an area which would survive for only a few years in any case when it will be hard enough to save those areas which can survive.

Conclusions

We believe that it is essential that municipalities in this region develop conservation policies and programs for natural areas now, before it is too late. Once these areas are destroyed, they cannot be recreated for decades ... In effect they are permanently lost. In order to save them, it will be necessary to have policies that will permit adequate amounts of various types of natural areas to be protected, some of them close to developed areas, others, probably larger, in the less developed parts of the region. Various methods of protection will be necessary, such as purchase, zoning controls and clauses in development contracts. It will also be necessary to have management programs once such areas have been set aside, to provide any facilities which might be necessary, such as trails, parking areas and picnic areas, and to ensure that they are not overused.

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, which is composed of amateur and professional naturalists, is prepared to offer what assistance we can in the conservation of natural areas. In particular, we can help to identify natural areas of special interest for conservation. We have information on some areas already. It is possible, depending on how much time our professional members can spare, that we may be able to do a detailed evaluation of an area or propose a management program for an area.

27 August 1973

Dr. A.H. Reddoch,
Chairman,
Research & Briefs Committee.

DO YOU AS A MEMBER OF THIS CLUB FEEL THAT THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS ACCURATELY YOUR OPINIONS?

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO THE AUTHOR.

That time of year has arrived when an assist to the birds at mealtime is welcome. Both of the club feeders have been in operation since about the middle of October and will continue to function to approximately the end of March.

The west-end feeder is located on Moodie Drive in Jack Pine Nature Trail area, 2½ miles south of Bells Corners on Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources property, and our east-end one on NCC territory is situated on the Davidson Road between Conroy and Hawthorne Roads, at the Pine Grove Picnic site.

Last winter, trail visitors were able to observe and enjoy, some for the first time, Gray Jays, Boreal Chickadees, Hawk Owl, the three-toed woodpeckers, as well as experiencing other aspects of our natural environment.

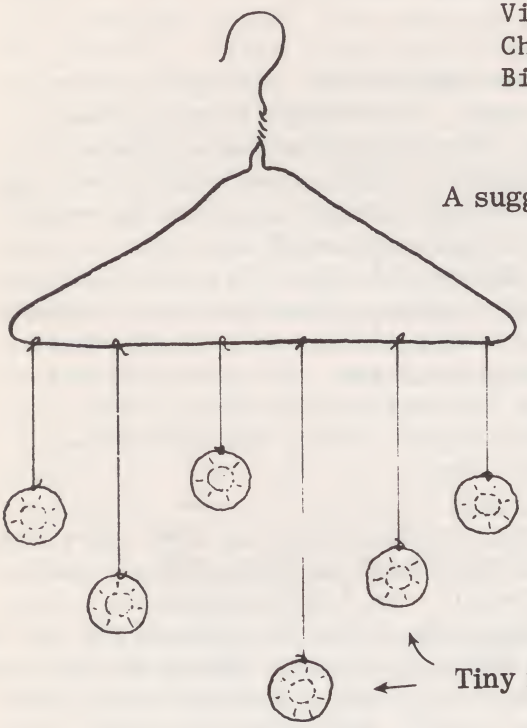
Your Bird Feeder Committee would like to express sincere thanks to donors of seed, suet, cash and time; to "elves" who have replenished stock and done other kind deeds without revealing themselves; and to the children of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa an extra special "chirp" for their generous donation of a Sunday's offering.

Without the cooperation of the birds, of course, a feeder would not be necessary, but certainly a great deal of the success of this venture is due to the enthusiasm and devotion of Hazel and Hugh Munro at the west-end station and George McGee and Bill Holland at the east-end one. They are doing an excellent public relations job as well.

One Problem: Dogs Are dogs compatible with nature trails and feeders? One committee member commented that small mammals do not seem to be as plentiful in the west-end feeder area, and another club member reports that at least two Snowshoe Hares and a Ruffed

Grouse have been killed, presumably by dogs. A suggestion from another committee member was that perhaps a thought could be given to setting aside an area away from trails and feeders but in vicinity of the parking lots for exercising dogs. Have you any opinions or suggestions? If so, we would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Vi Humphreys
Chairman,
Bird Feeder Committee



WATCH FOR COLOUR-MARKED GULLS

A study of the local movements of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls in southern Ontario has recently been initiated. Observers are urged to watch for individuals of these species which are adorned with orange plumage dye and coloured, plastic leg ribbons. If you see such a gull, please note the location of the orange dye, the colour and leg upon which the ribbons (there may be up to four ribbons on each gull) are located, and, of course, the date and location of your sighting. This information should be sent to D.V. Weseloh or Bob Sutherland, 44 Baleberry Cres., Weston, Ontario.

A NOVEMBER RAMBLE

The Tale of the Three (or more) Bears

Anne Hanes

City dwellers sometimes behave strangely when turned loose in the woods. Certainly anyone would have thought us crazy, observing the route taken by four adults and one hapless child as we worked our way through the wilds of Gatineau Park on a dull November afternoon. There would have appeared no logic to our route - with erratic changes of direction and lack of any attempt to avoid obstacles. Sometimes we climbed straight up a boulder-strewn cliff, only to descend again not far from where we began. We splashed and climbed through swamps full of fallen trees, when a clear path lay parallel to our route not far away. What on earth were we doing?

It began with a reasonable question. We know that there are bears in Gatineau Park (although personally I have never seen one there). We find evidence of their presence on almost every hike into the Park, from spring to fall. We began to ask each other, "Where do Gatineau Park bears spend the winter?" An old wives' tale says they curl up in hollow trees. But there are many more bears than bear-sized trees, hollow or otherwise, in Gatineau Park. Caves, perhaps?

John MacFie, in The Young Naturalist (12:8) says, "Unlike cartoon bears, Ontario bears do not den up in spacious caves. The rock of forested Ontario isn't of the sort that caves form in, and I think a large cave would tend to be too draughty and wet for a bear seeking a cozy place to sleep through the winter. Any enclosed dry, bear-sized space the entrance to which can be plugged with forest litter, can serve as a den. It might be a hollow log, tree or stump, the raised root mass of a wind-tripped tree, or a crevice beneath a slab of rock that has slid down the slope of a granite outcrop." Quebec bears likewise, presumably.

"A Hinterland Who's Who" about the black bear, by the Canadian Wildlife Service, says "A suitable denning site may be under a tree stump or over-turned log, or in a hole in a hillside. Most dens are only large enough to accommodate a bear when it is curled up."

During October the cabin across the valley to the north of ours had received several visits from The Bear. With obvious pride, the weekend occupants pointed out the damage: great claw-spaced rents in their screen door, fresh gashes on a nearby tree where The Bear had climbed up and bumbled over their roof, knocking askew the rain-hat on the chimney. We were a bit put out by all this attention to our neighbours' cabin, until the following weekend when we discovered that The Bear had been to our cabin too. We happily reported to the neighbours that The Bear had bent back some of the armour plate on our outhouse. (This is aluminum sheet nailed over the plywood walls to conceal holes chewed in it by porcupines, and to discourage further consumption of this vital structure.) Our cabin too had a ripped screen and other evidence that The Bear had peeked in. The Bear obviously liked the neighbourhood - would he winter somewhere nearby? "All we need is a little snow on the ground," said neighbour-to-the-north, "and perhaps we can find out more about him."

The Sunday of the Great Bear Hunt was perfect. An inch of fresh snow fell after midnight Saturday and animal tracks were everywhere. Snow is magic material in a place like Gatineau Park. All autumn we had tramped through woods that seemed devoid of mammalian life except for an occasional red squirrel. Then with the snow appeared evidence of a teeming population. In the short distance between car and cabin on the edge of the Park, we crossed trails of mouse, hare, mink, grouse and deer, and later added fisher, shrew, marten (possibly), and bear to our weekend list.

By prior arrangement with the neighbours we met at a trail junction on a high ridge to the west, just inside the Park. Though no one could take credit for planning it, there at the appointed spot was the track of The Bear; except that....aren't there two of them? Yes, here's where they followed separate routes around trees. We proceeded to track them, and for the next

two hours we walked, climbed, stumbled and splashed along the crazy course referred to above. Another bear had evidently joined the party at one point. We split up to follow the various tracks when they diverged. Sometimes, there seemed to be one, or several, more bears who joined it, or them. When someone near me called out to another tracker to ask, "How many bears have you over there?", the reply shot back, "twelve!", but that was certainly inflationary. An occasional turnabout made us suspect that the bears included Pooh, who was leading a Woozle Hunt. It soon became clear, however, that we were following not fewer than three bears, and quite possibly four or five.

From one place where a bear had squeezed under a leaning tree, I collected a few hairs from the bark "for later microscopic examination", I announced importantly. Later, when they spotted some huge bear droppings containing a quantity of hair, my fellow trackers urged me to fill my pockets, in the interests of scientific analysis.

The bears had not been merely travelling. At a leafy spot beneath oaks, we pictured the bears enjoying

GATINEAU PARK BEAVER POND IN EARLY WINTER A. Hanes

a grand romp - leaves were scuffled and scattered all over, including a ring around a tree trunk. What fun it would have been to watch them! In another place, however, we noticed numbers of half-chewed acorns among scuffled leaves; perhaps it had all been serious business. Another sign of activity along the trail was a stump clawed apart, perhaps to yield tasty grubs.

The most revealing part of our jaunt was in the swampy tangle. Tracks led us to the top of an enormous boulder which was split into several large chunks. The bear(s) had evidently dropped into the largest chasm and investigated the various cavities around it. None of us was certain that a bear might not still be down below; nevertheless, we persuaded the junior member of our party to drop down and see if there might be a bear-sized hollow in there somewhere. When he disappeared from our view completely, we understood why the location might appeal to a bear in late autumn.

We were diverted from the bears' trail when it came down to the edge of a beaver pond, coated with gray icy slush. A beaver-wide channel through the slush could be seen parallel to the shore about 15 feet out. Near here the bears had plunged in to cross the pond, walking along the trunk of a fallen birch which lay a foot or so below the water surface. Noting the spot, we detoured a quarter mile around the end of the pond and picked up the trail where the animals had emerged, dripping muddy water, on the opposite shore.

The tracks led on, and on. Sometimes I found myself following tracks of Greb-footed Ape rather than bear. Eventually, darkness drove us to abandon our game, and I returned home completely exhausted, but deeply satisfied nevertheless. Had we answered the Question? Well, no (but we would keep an eye on the split boulder). Had we succeeded in satisfying ourselves on that question, we would soon find another excuse for our next mad ramble. The pursuit of knowledge is endless, happily, and speculations about the flora and fauna of Gatineau Park have provided the basis for some of this naturalist's most delightful experiences. These are just the bear facts!

On a frozen beaver pond. A. Hanes

OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU

Here's an interesting way to do your bit. A Club member is needed to act as a Recording and Corresponding Secretary to the BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE. Someone with both an interest in birds and access to a typewriter would be especially useful. If you're interested, please call Roger Foxall at 745-7791 after 8 p.m.

A SPEAKER FOR YOUR GROUP

The Education Committee of the OFNC has a list of speakers available to address other groups on natural history and environmental subjects. If you would like information, call Mrs. Merriam at 692-4455 (evenings).

I N D E X to Volume Seven

O F N C EVENTS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

arranged by the Excursions and Lectures Committee
Roger A. Foxall, chairman (745-7791)

Thursday November 15

General Meeting: THE ROLE OF THE OFNC IN LOCAL CONSERVATION
Chairman: Dr. Irwin Brodo
Meet: St. Andrew's Church
Kent & Wellington
Time: 8 p.m.

The OFNC is becoming increasingly active in the field of local conservation. Several natural areas of considerable importance are threatened in the immediate future by the spread of urban development, recreational amenities and highway construction. Long-term regional plans are being proposed which naturalists should consider in detail now, so that a unified voice can express concern for the environment and defend areas of specific interest before these plans are adopted. This meeting will be an open discussion of these problems, dealing in particular with the future development of the Graham's Bay (Ottawa Beach) area, possible attempts to establish trails, boardwalks, etc. in the Mer Bleue, and the respective roles of the Council and the membership in local conservation issues.

Thursday December 6

FISHES OF THE OTTAWA AREA

Speaker: Dr. Don McAllister
Meet: St. Andrew's Church
Kent & Wellington
Time: 8 p.m.

(The ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, formerly held in December of each year, has been put forward to January by revision of the Constitution. Members will receive notice of the 95th ABM by mail. An announcement will appear also in the January-February 1974 issue of Trail & Landscape.)

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